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REPRINTED FROM THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW
NEW SERIES
VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 3

THE CHRIST PASSAGE IN JOSEPHUS

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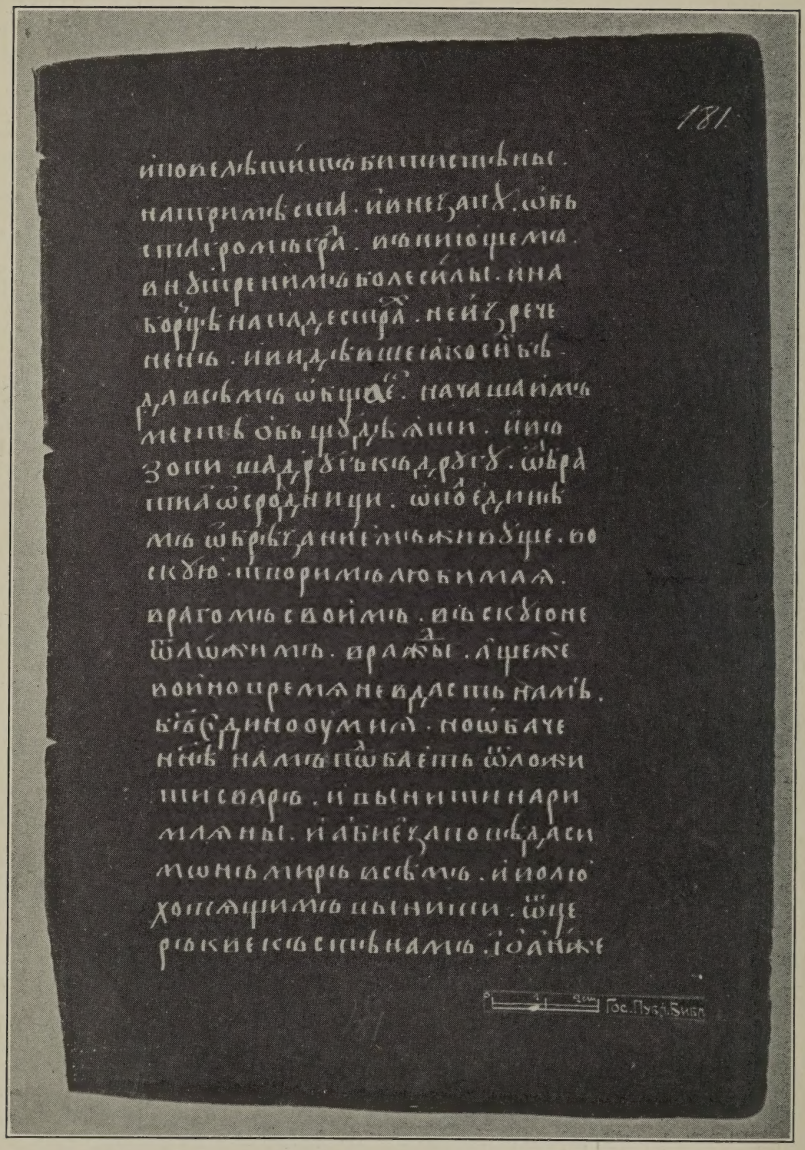
PHILADELPHIA
THE DROPSIE COLLEGE FOR HEBREW AND COGNATE LEARNING
1928



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THE CHRIST PASSAGE IN JOSEPHUS*

By Solomon Zeitlin, Dropsie College

In all the outstanding editions and even manuscripts which we possess of the Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus, we find that Josephus mentions Jesus twice. In one, the well-known Christian passage, he relates the story of Jesus and his crucifixion; the other passage is in connection with the trial of James before the Sanhedrin. The first passage reads as follows:

> "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, *if it be lawful to call him a man.* For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. *He was the Christ*; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first ceased not, for he appeared to them thereafter again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And even now the *tribe of Christians* so named from him is not extinct."[1]

In this passage Josephus names Jesus as the Christ. This paragraph, as is well known, has been rejected by scholars of note as not authentic.[2] Josephus, according to their

*I wish to express my thanks to Professor André Mazon, of the Collège de France, and to the Director and Secretary of the Public Library and the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad, particularly to the Academician Istrin, for their courtesy and assistance.

[1] Ant. XVIII, 3.3.

[2] E. Norden in *Neue Jahrbücher für das Klassische Altertum*, V. 31, 1913: "Josephus und Tacitus über Jesus Christus und eine Messianische

opinion, could never have written of Jesus as the Messiah, and Origen twice states that Josephus did not admit that Jesus was the Messiah. Some scholars throw doubt only on a part of this narrative and are of the opinion that the words "Jesus was a Messiah and arose on the third day" are a later Christian interpolation,[3] while other scholars, though a very few, are of the opinion that the whole passage is genuine.[4]

In addition to the Christian passage, Jesus is mentioned by Josephus in another passage in relation with James. In the second passage we read how the high priest Ananus seized the opportunity which had been presented to him by the death of Festus, and brought James, the brother of Jesus, before the Sanhedrin.

"He," Josephus tells us, "thinking that a favorable opportunity presented itself—Festus being dead and Albinus still on the road—summoned the court of the Sanhedrin, brought before it the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ—James was his name—with some others, and, after accusing them of transgressing the law, delivered them over to be stoned to death. This action aroused the indignation of all citizens of the highest reputation for moderation and punctilious observance of the law; and they sent a secret message to King Agrippa, petitioning him to restrain Ananus from similar proceedings in future . . . Some of them, moreover, went to meet Albinus on his way from Alexandria and explained that it was illegal for Ananus to convene a meeting of the Sanhedrin without his consent."[5]

Prophetie;" see E. Schürer, *Geschichte*, I, where the older literature is quoted.

[3] Th. Reinach, *R.E.J.*, 1897; P. Corrsen, *Zeitschrift f. die N. T. Wissenschaft*, 1914.

[4] F. Burkitt, *Theologish Tijdschrift*, Leiden, 1913; A. Harnack, *Internat. Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft und Technik*, 1913.

[5] Ant. XX, 9.1.

Origen[6] on three occasions quotes this passage of the Antiquities with some variation.[7] He says that, according to Josephus, the execution of James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Messiah, caused the destruction of the Temple.[8] While we do not find this version in our text of the Antiquities, the writer of the *Chronicon Paschale* also quotes the same passage, not from the Antiquities, but from the Wars.[9] Eusebius[10] in the name of Hegesippus[11] says that James was thrown from the roof of the Temple, stoned, and finally killed and *immediately thereafter Vespasian laid siege to Jerusalem.*[12] Thus Hegesippus also connects the death of James with the siege of Jerusalem. From all this we may conclude that in the place of this passage in the Antiquities there was, before the time of Origen and Eusebius, a completely different version of the same event; and also, if we should believe the words of the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*, this story was recorded in the Wars but there was no mention of it in the Antiquities.

Now Origen not only does not quote the Christian passage, but he uses such language as to make it impossible to maintain that the words "he was the Christ" appeared in the text, for he says: Though he (Josephus) did not believe in Jesus as the Christ, he none the less asseverates that the calamity of the destruction of the Temple came upon the Jews for putting to death James, who was most distinguished for his justice.[13] If the Christ passage really appeared in Josephus, it would be hard to believe that Origen, who

[6] Died 254 C. E.

[7] Origenes, Comment. in Matth, 13; Contra Celsum I, 77; II, 13.

[8] Contra Celsum II, 13; also *idem* I., 63. See Add. note, I.

[9] *Chronicon Paschale*, I, 63.

[10] Died 339 or 340 C. E.

[11] Died 189 C. E.

[12] Eusebius, *History*, II, 23.

[13] Comm. in Matt. X, 17; Contra Celsum I, 47.

quotes the James passage, should not know the other passage, which is recorded in the same chapter.

Again, as many scholars have pointed out, Josephus, a Jew, a Pharisee, could not say of Jesus that he was the Christ and that he arose on the third day as was foretold by the Prophets. On the other hand, the scholars who favor the authenticity of this passage claim that no Christian would write of Jesus that he was a wise man—"if it be lawful to call him a man."[14] That could be done only by a Jew, but not by a Christian. Nor would a Christian interpreter say about Jesus that "he did wonderful works;"[15] that could be said only by a Jew—not by a Christian. Similarly, the scholars who uphold the authenticity of this passage claim that no Christian would have described Christians as a "tribe,"[16] and therefore the word "tribe" and the word "man" show that this passage was written by Josephus.

The Greek style, they maintain, also suggests that it is the style of Josephus, as was pointed out by Harnack.[17] Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the two passages are not from the hand of Josephus. Mr. Thackeray says: "If these words are a Christian interpolation, they are of an artistic forgery."[18] Yes, they are of an artistic forgery!

Besides, a consideration of Josephus' political outlook and his social standing at the time, indicates that he could not have admired Jesus and his followers, the Christians, for as we know, they stood for political as well as for social reform;[20]

[14] σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή.

[15] *Jésus de Nazareth*, Paris, 1897.

[16] τὸ φῦλον.

[17] Harnack, in *Internat. M.* f. *W. und Technik*, 1913.

[18] *Judaism and the Beginnings of Christianity*, p. 223.

[19] As for the word "Tribe" which Thackeray (*l. c.*) says is used in an un-Christian sense, see below pp. 238–40.

[20] Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve. Matt. 4, 9–10. . . We found him perverting the nation and forbidding them to give tribute to Caesar. Luke 23.2.

they were against the rich as well as against the lordship of man over man. Being an aristocrat, of a family of priests, and under the influence of the might of Rome, he could look upon the Christians only as wicked and as madmen. He expresses this view in another passage on the Apocalyptists who are the forerunners of the Christians:

> "There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intention, and they laid waste the happy state of the city more than did these marauders. These men deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government, and this prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them in the wilderness, pretending that God did there show them the signals of liberty."[21]

If these two passages, i. e. the Christian passage and the James passage, really belong to Josephus, Josephus in the second passage, where he says "James the brother of Christ," would have said that "*this is the Christ who was crucified by Pilate,*" as we see throughout his books that where he has occasion to mention a name twice he repeats that "this is the same man."

This may be seen in the case of Sameas, who, at the time of the trial of Herod before the Sanhedrin, stood up and reproached his fellow members of the Sanhedrin for not having the courage to condemn Herod. When Josephus tells us in another passage that Sameas was spared by Herod, he tells us that it is the same Sameas who had the courage to reproach the members of the Sanhedrin for not condemning Herod.[22] We find this manner of expression in reference to Judah of Galilee, the author of the sect which is called the

[21] B. J. II, 13.
[22] ὁ δὲ Σαμαίας οὗτος, Ant. XV, 1.

Fourth Philosophy. When Josephus has occasion to mention the Fourth Philosophy, he always mentions the founder of this sect, Judah, and invariably adds that this is the Judah who was responsible for all the calamities which befell the Jews. And when he mentions even his son, Menahem, he does not forget to add that he was the son of Judah who was the author of the Fourth Philosophy, who reproached the Jews for paying taxes to the Romans.[23] The same manner of expression we find in other instances. Hence, if in the so-called Christian passage Josephus had mentioned Jesus, he would have stated in his way of writing, in the second passage, that that is the Jesus who was crucified at the time of Pilate. Therefore we must assume that this so-called Christian passage was not written by Josephus, and we may add that Josephus had no knowledge of the existence of Jesus. For if he had, he would have referred to him exactly as he does refer to Judah of Galilee, the author of the Fourth Philosophy, who had the same idea as the early Christians about the equality of man, and of no lordship of man over man, but who used a different method for carrying out his idea. Also, as pointed out above, the Apocalyptists mentioned by Josephus, but not Jesus. Hence Josephus cannot be a witness to the historicity of Jesus, even in an unfavorable way to the Christians; and this passage was later interpolated by a Christian.

[23] There was one Judah the Son of that arch-robber Hezekiah, who formerly overran the country and had been subdued by King Herod, B. J. II, 4. In the meantime one Menahem the son of Judah . . . and had formerly reproached the Jews under Cyrenius, that after God they were subject to the Romans, *ibid.* II, 17. It was one Eleazar . . . He was a descendant from that Judah who had persuaded abundance of the Jews . . . not to submit to the taxation when Cyrenius was sent into Judea to make one. *Ibid.* VII, 8. The sons of Judah of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judah who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews. Ant. XX, 5.

The Author of the Christ Passage in Josephus

It is well known that the so-called Christian passage is not quoted by Origen. The first to quote the passageis Eusebius. Since there is no reference to the passage by Origen we must assume that the interpolation came between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius. Thackeray says if the words in this passage are interpolated by a Christian "they are of an artistic forgery . . . The writer has not been content to interpose a gloss in his own language but has masqueraded under the mantle of the historian, and by studying his author has endeavored to palm off his composition upon him. He has, as we saw, not shrunk from using the words 'pleasure' and 'tribe' in an un-Christian sense."[24] The interpolator certainly masqueraded under the mantle of the historian by studying the method of Josephus, but, as pointed out above, he was not successful. From the use of the word "tribe"[25] we can detect who was the real author of this passage.

According to my mind Eusebius, who first cites this passage,[26] *was its author.* Eusebius himself was a historian who admired Josephus very much and made a thorough study of him and was therefore able to masquerade under the mantle of Josephus; but by referring to the Christians as a "tribe," "race" he removed the mask.

It seems worth while to place side by side for the reader the Christian passage as found in Josephus and Eusebius:

JOSEPHUS	EUSEBIUS
"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of	"And there lived at that time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be proper to call him a man. For he was a

[24] *Judaism and the Beginnings of Christianity,* p. 232.
[25] φῦλον.
[26] See A.N. II.

wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and manyof the Greeks (Gentiles). He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first ceased not, for he appeared to them thereafter again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And even now the *Tribe* of *Christians* so named from him is not extinct."

doer of wonderful works, and a teacher of such men as receive the truth in gladness. And he attached to himself many of the Jews, and many also of the Greeks (Centiles). He was the Christ. When Pilate, on the accusation of our principal men, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him in the beginning did not cease loving him. For he appeared unto them again alive on the third day, the divine prohets having told these and countless other wonderful things concerning him. Moreover, the race of Christians, named after him, continues down to the present day."

So far as I know, throughout the entire literature of the Ante-Nicene Fathers the word φῦλον "tribe," "race" with reference to Christians was never used, either by the Fathers or in quoting non-Christian writers. The first to use this word, with reference to Christians, was Eusebius quoting Trajan. Eusebius tells us in the name of Tertullian that when Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, wrote to Trajan asking for instruc- tions about the Christian race,[27] Trajan in reply wrote that "the race of Christians should not be sought after, but when found should be

[27] τὸ Χριστιανῶν φῦλον.

punished."[28] Tertullian himself tells us[29] that Pliny[30] the Younger had condemned some *Christians* to death, and, being still annoyed by their great numbers, sought the advice of Trajan. Trajan wrote back to Pliny that this people ("hoc genus") were by no means to be sought after but if they were brought before him they should be punished.[31] Tertullian, in telling us about this persecution, uses the words "Christians" and "hoc genus"—this people—but not *tribus*. Rufinus who lived at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, is the author of a translation of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical history into Latin. In translating this passage by Eusebius he does not use the word *tribus*,[32] as we should expect from the word φῦλον,[33] but the word *Christiani* alone, since Rufinus who knew Tertullian's Apology in the original did not find in Tertullian the word *tribus*.

Pliny himself does not refer to the Christians as a *race*, *tribe*, but calls them Christians,[34] and likewise, Trajan, in his reply to Pliny, does not use the word *tribe* but calls them Christians. "Thou hast followed the right course, my Secundus, in treating the case of those who have been brought before thee as *Christians*, for no fixed rule can be laid down which shall be applicable to all cases. They are not to be searched for; if they are accused and convicted, they are to be punished. Nevertheless with the proviso that he who denies that he is a Christian, and proves it by his act

[28] See A.N. III.
[29] Died Circa 220 C. E.
[30] Died 118 C. E.
[31] See A.N. IV.
[32] See A.N. V.
[33] In the New Testament we find the word recorded a few times, in Mat 19, 28; 24, 30; Luke 2, 36; 22, 30; Act. 13, 21; Rom. 11, 1; Phil. 311, 5; Heb. 7, 13.14; Rev. 5, 5; 7, 4–9; in all these places the Latin version of the New Testament has *tribus*.
[34] See A.N. VI.

(re ipsa), i. e., by making supplication to our gods—although suspected may, by repentance, obtain pardon. Anonymous accusations ought not to be admitted in any proceedings, for they are of most evil precedent, and are not in accord with our age."[35]

It is therefore certainly strange that the sources from which Eusebius draws, and the letters themselves do not use the word "race," "tribe" and that Eusebius, ostensibly copying the words of Pliny and Trajan, adds to Christians the word "race," "tribe."

We may say with some assurance that the words "tribe of Christians" which we find in the Christian passage of Josephus, shows that this passage *was written by Eusebius*. We have seen from the above quotations that he is the only man who used the word *tribe* in connection with Christians.

Eusebius, in order to remove any suspicion as to the interpolated character of this passage, used words such as it would be believed could never have been used by Christians, as for example—"if he should be called a man, a doer of marvelous acts . . . and the tribe of Christians are named from him." But, he forgot to insert, in the James passage, the gloss, "This is the Jesus whom Pilate had sentenced to the cross." With this, and with the expression "the tribe of Christians," he revealed the interpolation of this passage *and its author*.

The Slavonic Josephus

All who are of the opinion that Jesus of Nazareth was a historical person feel a little uneasy at the fact that Josephus, who wrote the Jewish history of that period and who elaborated fully on every episode, gave very little space to the

[35] See A.N. VII.

personal history of Jesus, and that even those few lines are considered by some scholars as not authentic.[36]

To the rescue of the authenticity of this passage recently Doctors Eisler,[37] Mead,[38] and Buch[39] have come with a new discovery, namely, that Josephus not only knew about Jesus of Nazareth but gave a full description of his life, personality, and crucifixion. But this Josephus did not place in his Wars of the Jews or in the Antiquities, which he wrote in the Greek language, but in his book "The Wars of the Jews," which he wrote in the Aramaic language for his fellow Jews in Babylon.[40]

Josephus, they say, was afraid to write about Jesus in his Greek edition of The Wars of the Jews lest the Romans should suspect that he admired the Messiah (Christ). But in his Aramaic edition of The Wars of the Jews which he wrote for the Jews in Babylon, he told them about the wonder-doer, Jesus of Nazareth. This original Aramaic edition was later translated by the Chazars into the old Slavonic, and this translation is in the public library of Leningrad.

The Christian passage in the Slavonic Josephus reads as follows: "At that time also a man came forward—if even it is fitting to call him man (simply). His nature as well as his form were a man's; but his showing forth was more than (that) of a man. His works, that is to say, were godly and he wrought wonder deeds amazing and full of power. Therefore it is not possible for me to call him a man (simply). But again looking at the existence he shared with all, I would also not call him an angel. And all that he wrought

[36] See above, p. 231.

[37] Robert Eisler, "The Newly Rediscovered Witness of Josephus to Jesus," *The Quest*, 1926.

[38] G. R. S. Mead, "The Slavonic Josephus Account of the Baptist and Jesus," *The Quest*, 1924.

[39] Buch, "A Remarkable Discovery Concerning Jesus Christ," *Diocese of Liverpool Review*, 1926.

[40] Eisler, *l. c.*

through some kind of invisible power, he wrought by word and command. Some said of him that 'our first Law-giver has risen from the dead and shows forth many cures and arts'. But others supposed (less definitely) that he is sent by God. Now he opposed himself in much to the Law, and did not observe the Sabbath according to ancestral custom. Yet, on the other hand, he did nothing reprehensible nor any crime, but by word solely he effected everything. And many from the folk followed him and received his teachings. And many souls became wavering, supposing that thereby the Jewish tribes would free themselves from the Romans' hands. Now it was his custom often to stop on the Mount of Olives, facing the city. And there also be avouched his cures to the people.

"And there gathered themselves to him of servants a hundred and fifty, but of the folk a multitude. But when they saw his power, that he accomplished everything that he would by word, they urged him that he should enter the city and cut down the Roman soldiers and Pilate, and rule over us. But that one scorned it. And thereafter when knowledge of it came to the Jewish leaders, they gathered together with the high priest and spoke: 'We are powerless and weak to withstand the Romans. But as withal the bow is bent, we will go and tell Pilate what we have heard, and we will be without distress, lest if he hear it from others, we be robbed of our substance and ourselves be put to the sword and our children ruined.' And they went and told it to Pilate.

"And he sent and had many of the people cut down. And he had that wonder-doer brought up. And when he had instituted a trial concerning him he perceived that he is a doer of good, but not an evil-doer, nor a revolutionary, nor one who aimed at power, and let him free. He had, you should know, healed his dying wife. And he went to his accustomed place and wrought his accustomed works. And

as again more folk gathered themselves together round him, then did he win glory through his works more than all.

"The teachers of the Law were (therefore) envenomed with envy and gave thirty talents to Pilate, in order that he should put him to death. And he, after he had taken the money, gave them consent that they should themselves carry out their purpose, and they took and crucified him according to the ancestral law."[41]

This passage, according to these scholars, shows that Josephus not only knew about Jesus, but was also acquainted with the trial of Jesus before Pilate. From this again they claim that Josephus was well aware that Jesus did not observe the Sabbath according to the ancestral custom.

Doctor Eisler says:[42] "The Slavonic is either a translation of a very free and arbitrary Byzantine paraphrase of the extant Greek text, or it is based on another edition of the 'Wars' than the Greek text which is so familiar to the whole Occidental world. In the first case the Slavonic translation must have worked on the basis of a copy of Josephus which still contained the original account about John the Baptist and Jesus, that was later on remorselessly removed by the Christian copyists of the 'Wars' on the one hand, and the other overworked into the present shape."

He accepts the second alternative, "even," as he says, "without knowing a word of the unedited Slavonic text." He claims that Josephus wrote this "Wars" for the Jews in Babylon. Later it came into the hands of the Chazars. When they were subjugated by the Russians and forcibly converted to Christianity, their manuscripts must have

[41] G. R. A. Mead, *l. c.* The Russian text is given by Popoff, *Übersicht der Chronographen* (in Russian), 1886. This passage was given by A. Berendts, "Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im Slavischen De Bello Judaico des Josephus," *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leipzig, 1906. See A.N. VIII.

[42] Eisler, *ibid.*

fallen into the hands of the Russians and may even have been translated with the help of some converted Chazar Rabbi into the old Slavonic.

The "Newly Rediscovered Witness" published by Doctor Eisler goes back to the year 1906 when Doctor A. Berendts published a length work (in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Alt-Christlichen Literatur*, edited by O. Gebhardt and A. Harnack) entitled "Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im Slavischen de Bello Judaico des Josephus," in which he tries to prove by the same passage that Josephus knew about Jesus.

According to Berendts, the standard text of Josephus is really a revision of the first written account of the Jewish War which he wrote for the "Upper Barbarians" in his native tongue. This first account of the War which he wrote for the Jews in Babylon had been translated into Greek, and later into the Slavonic language. In this work Josephus had spoken of Jesus several times, while in preparing a version for the Romans he omitted these passages. E. Schürer, however, in his review of Berendts' article, proved that this so-called Christian passage in the Slavonic Josephus is not from the hand of Josephus.[43]

E. Von Dobshütz, in his article on Josephus in Hastings' Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, is inclined to accept Berendts' view against Schürer's, but he says that the

[43] E. Schürer, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, XXXI (1906), No. 9. Comp. also J. Frey, *Der Slavische Josephus*, 1908; R. Seeberg, *Von Christus und dem Christentum*, 1908; Berendts, "Analecta zum Slavischen Josephus," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1908, pp. 47–70; A. Marmorstein, "Some Remarks on the Slavonic Josephus," *The Quest*, 1926. R. Eisler, "Jésus d'après la Version Slave de Flavius Josephe," *Revue de l'Histoire de Religion*, 1926; Maurice Goguel, "Le témoignage de la Version Slave de la guerre Juive," *ibid.*; Paul-Louis Conchaud, "Les Textes rélatifs a Jésus dans la Version Slave de Josephe," *ibid.*

authenticity of this passage cannot be decided unless we have the full text of the Slavonic Josephus. I expressed the same opinion in my article "Origine de la divergence entre les Evangiles Snyoptiques et l'Evangile non-Synoptique quant à la date de la crucifixion de Jésus,"[44] that no conclusion can be drawn from this passage as long as we have not made a critical examination of the whole book.

With this purpose in mind and upon the request of a number of scholars, the present writer went to Russia to examine all the manuscripts of the Slavonic Josephus which are found there. After a study of the manuscripts I have no doubt whatsoever that this "Wars of the Jews" was not translated from an Aramaic "Wars" which Josephus is supposed to have written. First, there is no trace of Semitisms there, and secondly, and most conclusively, if this Slavonic "Wars of the Jews" is a translation from the Aramaic which Josephus is supposed to have written for the Jews in Babylon, the months—and especially the months during which Passover fell or the Temple was destroyed—would have been referred to by Josephus by their Hebrew names, as Nisan and Ab, etc., in the Slavonic edition. Instead, we are told that Passover fell on the fourteenth of the month Xanthicus and the destruction of the Temple took place on the tenth of the month Lous.[45] The names of these months are Syro-Macedonian, and were used in the first century throughout Asia Minor. They were never current in Babylon and their use everywhere died out shortly, the Roman calendar taking their place.

Now if this Slavonic Josephus is a translation from the Aramaic, why are the months given Macedonian names, since the Jews in Babylon had no conception whatsoever of these names? Would it not be a matter of course that

[44] *Mélanges offerts à. Israel Lévi*, *REJ.*, 1926, pp. 208–209.
[45] See A.N. IX.

Josephus, who wrote in Aramaic for the Jews in Babylon, should use the Hebrew names?

Even assuming with Prof. Istrin that this Slavonic Josephus was translated from the Byzantine Greek, which in turn was translated from the Aramaic, the months would certainly remain in the original Hebrew names, but not Xanthicus and Lous, because when this Greek translation was supposedly made from the Aramaic these names were no longer in use.

Dr. Eisler maintains that this Slavonic Josephus was translated from the Aramaic into the old Slavonic in the ninth century by the Chazars. But this "Wars" is not written in the Old Slavonic, but in the Old Russian language, and was translated not earlier than the eleventh or the twelfth century. This opinion was also expressed to me by Prof. Istrin.

Dr. Eisler seeks to explain why the original Aramaic of Josephus was never quoted by the Rabbis of the Middle Ages, and is not known to us. The reason, according to him, is that Josephus was considered a traitor to the Jews and for that reason the Rabbis did not like to mention his name or to quote his words.[46] But Josephus is considered a traitor only by some modern scholars, and not by the Rabbis of the Middle Ages or of the Talmudic period. On the contrary, they expressed themselves very bitterly against the zealots or the war-party, all of whom were for the war against the Romans, since they blamed these parties for the destruction of the Temple and the Holy City. But they never were against the peace-party, of which R. Johanan and Josephus were members.

This Slavonic "Wars of the Jews" has a striking similarity to the Josippon. This may be seen from many passages. We find there the following statement: "In the year 19 of

[46] Eisler, *l. c.*

the reign of Agrippa, in the fifth month which the Jews called Ab, on the ninth day Nero sent presents."[47] The same statement is found in Josippon.[48] It is interesting to note that exactly the same statement is found in the English version of the "Wars of the Jews" which was published in London in 1688. "In the twentieth year of the reign of King Agrippa, on the ninth day of the month that is called Ab, viz. July, Nero Caesar sent a present." This edition is a translation of Josippon, and this statement is not found in Josephus.

That the Christian passage of the Slavonic Josephus is not from the hand of Josephus is very obvious. As stated above, the entire book "Wars of the Jews" was not translated from the Aramaic which Josephus is supposed to have written. Even the passage by itself could not have been written by Josephus, who would not speak of Jesus or of any Messiah in such a manner.[49]

Professor Case, in his book "The Historicity of Jesus," has rightly pointed out that this passage is not from the hand of Josephus.

"The language is too appreciative of Jesus' uniqueness and superhuman character to have come from anyone who was not a Christian. While Jesus is said to have been human in nature and form, his appearing was more than human and his works were divine, so that he could neither be called a man nor an angel. He is the unique wonder-worker sent forth from God. This surely is Christian language, and not altogether unlike some ideas in the Fourth Gospel.

[47] Leta 19 Ẓ. Agrippin mẓa pataḥo ezsh zshidkoe affom nariẓant S. est Julja 9 dnja Neron poslal dari.

[48] בשנת כ' שנה למלך אגריפס בחדש החמישי הוא חדש אב ביום תשעה לחדש, וישלח ניארין הקיסר. In the twentieth year of the reign of King Agrippa, in the fifth month, i. e., the month Ab, in the ninth day of the month, Nero Ceasar sent a present.

[49] See A.N. X.

"Wide variations from the gospel narratives, even contradictions of these narratives, cannot establish priority for the variant version. The apocryphal gospels show clearly that Christian writers familiar with gospel tradition could depart from it widely. We cannot believe that we are here dealing with direct testimony from Josephus."

Throughout the whole of this Slavonic Josephus are found many passages, which are interpolations by Christian authors. Beside the passage discussed, there is another striking passage, which is a later Christian interpolation, and throws light on the authenticity of the entire Slavonic Josephus. I refer to the passage in the Fourth Book, which was translated into German by A. Berendts, and later published by Gross. In this book we find a dialogue between two priests after Jerusalem was taken by Herod. The passage reads as follows: "Das Gesetz gebietet uns, keinen Anderstammigen als König zu haben. Doch wir erwarten den Gesalbten, den Sanften, aus Davids Geschlecht. Aber von Herodes wissen wir, dass er ein Araber ist, unbeschnitten. Der Gesalbte wird sanft heissen, aber dieser (ist's), der mit Blut erfüllt hat unser ganzes Land. Unter dem Gesalbten war es den Lahmen bestimmt, zu gehen, und den Blinden, sehend zu werden, den Armen reich zu werden. Aber unter diesem sind die Gesunden lahm geworden, die Sehenden sind erblindet, die Reichen sind Bettler geworden. Was ist dieses? oder wie? Haben die Propheten gelogen? Die Propheten haben geschrieben, dass nicht ermangeln wird ein Fürst aus Juda, bis dass der kommt, dem es übergeben ist. Auf den hoffen die Heiden. Aber ist dieser die Hoffnung für die Heiden? Denn wir hassen seine Missetaten. Wollen etwa die Heiden auf ihn hoffen?

"Wehe uns, weil uns Gott verlassen hat! Und vergessen sind wir von ihm! Und er will uns dahingeben zur Verwüstung und zum Verderben! Nicht wie unter Nebukadnezar

und Antiochus (ist es). Denn damals waren auch die Propheten dem Volke Lehrer. Und sie verhiessen in betreff der Gefangenschaft und in betreff der Rückkehr. Und jetzt: weder ist jemand, den man defragen könnte, noch jemand, mit dem man sich trösten könnte."[50]

This passage undoubtedly is a later interpolation by Christians and not by Josephus, as may be proved even from the contents. We find, in the dialogue, that one priest said that during the time of Antiochus, prophets were still among the Jews, while we learn from Josephus to the contrary, that prophets ceased among the Jews in the beginning of the Persian period.[51] Likewise the statement that prophets had written that a priest should not fail from Judah... that he is the expectation of the Gentiles, is not found in the Prophets but in the Torah. Josephus would never cite the Torah in the name of Prophets. This could have been written only by Christians, and we find strikingly similar passages throughout the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers.[52]

As a matter of fact, Josephus was not a believer in the Messianic doctrine. He believed that the Jewish deliverance from the yoke of the Gentiles would be by God himself. He pictured the Jewish state as a theocracy; namely, that God is the only authority and ruler, and the priest is the principal

[50] "Flavius Josephus vom Jüdischen Kriege B. I–IV. nach der Slavischen Übersetzung," von Alexander Berendts und Konrard Gross in the *Eesti Vahariigi Tartu Ulikooli Toimetused.* Tartu (Dorpat) 1924.

[51] Against Apion I, 7.

[52] "For those things which the prophets announced, saying 'Until he come for whom it is reserved, and He shall be the expectation of the Gentiles,' the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, Ch. 14 (Longer Version). And was prophesied by Jacob. . . A Ruler shall not depart from Judah . . . Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Ch. LII. The prophecy . . . the ruler should not fail from Judah . . . and He is the expectation of the Gentiles," Origen against Celsus, Ch. 2, III. Compare also Eus. Eccl. Hist. I 6, "When the Kingdom of the Jews had devolved upon such a man (Herod) the expectation of the nations was, according to prophecy, already at the door."

mediator between God and the Jews, and is entrusted with the management of the divine worship, and also has to take care of the law—to judge and to punish those who transgress the laws.[53]

To say that Josephus was an adherent of the Messianic movement and believed in the Messiah, and the reason for his failure to mention the Messianic movement was his fear of the Romans, is to betray a lack of comprehension. If Josephus really had been a believer in the Messiah, he would not have been able to mask himself so completely that we could not read an inkling of this movement even between the lines. We learn from Josephus that he hated the leaders of the Fourth Philosophy and their followers, the Sicarii. He calls them murderers and bandits.[54] He claims that they were responsible for the calamity of the destruction of the Temple and of the Holy City. Nevertheless, he gives us a speech which was supposed to have been delivered by Eleazar, the last leader of the Sicarii before Masada fell. The speech of Eleazar reads in part as follows: "Since we, long ago, my gentle friends, resolved never to be servants to the Romans, nor to any other than to God himself, who

[53] "Some peoples have entrusted the supreme political power to monarchies, others to oligarchies, yet others to the masses. Our lawgiver, however, was attracted by none of these forms of policy, but gave to his constitution the form of what . . . may be termed "Theocracy", placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God. Could there be a finer or more equitable policy than one which sets God at the head of the Universe, which assigns the administration of its highest affairs to the whole body of priests, and entrusts to the supreme high priest the direction of the other priests?" Against Apion II; comp. also Ant. XIV, 3. In my opinion the Jews, before the destruction of the Temple, barring the Apocalyptists, did not believe in the idea of Messiah (Christos), in the technical sense of this word. Thus we can explain why we do not find any reference to the Messiah in the Tannaitic literature before 70 C.E., nor in the Apocryphal literature. The idea of the Messianic expectation is found only in the Apocalyptic literature. Comp. also E. Hühn Die Messianischen Weissagungen. Freiburg, 1899, p. 128.

[54] B. J. II, 13.3.

is the true and just Lord of mankind, the time is now come that pledges us to make that resolution true in part—we were the very first that revolted from them, and we are the last that fight against them, and I can but esteem it as a favor that it is still in our power to die bravely—and to such as were resolved either to live with honor or else to die.... ..that it is life that is a calamity to men and not death."[55]

This noble philosophic speech was not transmitted from Eleazar to Josephus. This speech was put into the mouth of Eleazar by Josephus. It was the philosophy of the Sicarii, whom Josephus called robbers and murderers, yet he could not help putting this inspiring speech into the mouth of their leader. Now if he had really been an adherent of the Messianic movement, why do we not find anything about this movement? We do find something about the Apocalyptic Pharisaic sect whom he calls wicked men, although not so impure in their actions, and more wicked in their intentions, and who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers (the Fourth Philosophy).[56]

Even without discussion of the particular passage dealing with the Messiah it is manifest from the instances we have adduced and from many other such interpolations throughout the whole book that this Slavonic "Wars" was not translated from any Semitic language, has nothing to do with a "Wars" that Josephus is supposed to have written for his fellow Jews in Babylon, and is so full of interpolations by Christians as to negate Dr. Eisler's claim that this manuscript settles the question of the historicity of Jesus.

[55] *Ibid.* VII, 8.6.
[56] *Ibid.* II, 13.4.

Additional Notes

I

... οὗ ὁ υἱὸς Τίτος καθεῖλε τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ὡς μὲν Ἰώσηπος γράφει, διὰ Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ὡς δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια παρίστησι, διὰ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Contra Celsum, II, 13; see also idem. I, 77.

II

The passage according to JOSEPHUS	The passage according to EUSEBIUS
Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ	Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ
τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον	τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον
Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνὴρ,	Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ,
εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν	εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν
λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ	λέγειν χρή. ἦν γὰρ
παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής,	παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής,
διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων	διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων
τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ	τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ
δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς	δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς
μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς	μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων [Ἰουδαίους],
δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ (ex gentibus)	πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ (ex gentibus)
ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ Χριστὸς	ἐπηγάγετο. ὁ Χριστὸς
οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν	οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν
ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων	ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων
ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν	ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν
σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος	σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος
Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο	Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο
οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες·	οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες.
ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην	ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην
ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν	ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν
ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν	ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν
ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία	ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία
περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια	περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια
εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν	εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν
τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ	τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ

τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον
οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.
Ant. XVIII, 3 [63].

τοῦδε ὠνομασμένων
οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.
Eccles. Hist. I, 11.

III

Πρὸς ἃ τὸν Τοαϊανὸν δόγμα τοιόνδε τεθεικέναι, 'τὸ Χριστιανῶν φῦλον μὴ ἐκζητεῖσθαι μὲν, ἐμπεσὸν δὲ κολάζεσθαι . . . . . Εἴληπται δ' ἡμῖν ἡ ἱστορία, ἐξ ἧς ἀνωτέρω δεδηλώκαμεν τοῦ Τερτυλλιανοῦ Ῥωμαϊκῆς Ἀπολογίας, ἧς ἡ ἑρμηνεία τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τρόπον . . . . Πρὸς ταῦτα ἀντέγραψε Τραϊανὸς, τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν φῦλον μὴ ἐκζητεῖσθαι μὲν, ἐμπεσὸν δὲ κολάζεσθαι.
—Eccles. Hist. III, 33.

IV

Plinius enim Secundus cum provinciam regeret, damnatis quibusdam *Christianis*, quibusdam gradu pulsis, ipsa tamen multitudine perturbatus, quid de caetero ageret, consuluit tunc Trajanum imperatorem, allegans praeter obstinationem non sacrificandi, nihil aliud se de sacramentis eorum comperisse, quam coetus antelucanos ad canendum Christo ut Deo et ad confoederandam disciplinam, homicidium, adulterium, fraudem, perfidiam, et caetera scelera prohibentes. Tunc Trajanus rescripsit, hoc genus inquirendos quidem non esse, oblatos vero puniri oportere. Apology II.

V

Πρὸς ἃ τὸν Τραϊανὸν δόγμα τοιόνδε τεθεικέναι, 'τὸ Χριστιανῶν φῦλον μὴ ἐκζητεῖσθαι, ἐμπεσὸν δὲ κολάζεσθαι.'—Eusebius.

Ad quae tunc Traianus rescripti sui auctoritate decernit, ut *Christiani* non quidem requirantur, si qui tamen inciderint, puniantur.—Rufinus.

Die griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig, 1903.

VI

Plinius Traiano Imperatori

Solemne est mihi, domine, omnia, de quibus dubito, ad te referre. Quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere, vel ignorantiam instruere? Cognitionibus de *Christianis* interfui numquam. Ideo nescio, quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat, aut quaeri. Nec mediocriter haesitavi, sitne aliquod discrimen aetatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustioribus differant, detur paenitentiae venia, an ei, qui omnino *Christianus* fuit, desisse non prosit, nomen ipsum, etiamsi flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini puniantur.

Interim in iis, qui ad me tamquam *Christiani* deferebantur, hunc sum secutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos, an essent *Christiani*. Confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus. Perseverantes duci

iussi. Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque esset, quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem, debere puniri. Fuerunt alii similis amentiae; quos, quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos.

Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri solet, diffundente se crimine plures species inciderunt. Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens. Qui negabant se esse *Christianos* aut fuisse, cum praeeunte me deos appellarent, et imagini tuae, quam proter hoc iusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, praeterea maledicerent Christo, quorum nihil posse cogi dicuntur, qui sunt re vera *Christiani*, dimittendos esse putavi. Alii ab indice nominati esse se *Christianos* dixerunt et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem, sed desiisse, quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos, non nemo etiam ante viginti quinque. Omnes et imaginem tuam deorumque simulacra venerati sunt: et Christo maledixerunt. . . Pliny Letters XCVI. The Loeb Classical Library, 1925.

VII

Traianus Plinio

Actum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis causis eorum, qui *Christiani* ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest. Conquirendi non sunt; si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt, ita tamen, ut, qui negaverit se *Christianum* esse idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est supplicando diis nostris, quamvis suspectus in praeteritum fuerit, veniam ex paenitentia impetret. Sine auctore vero propositi libelli nullo crimine locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli, nec nostri saeculi est. *Ibid.* XCVII.

VIII

Damals trat ein Mensch auf, wenn es auch geziemend ist ihn einen Menschen zu nennen; sowohl seine Natur wie seine Gestalt waren menschlich, seine Erscheinung aber war mehr als menschlish. Seine Werke jedoch waren göttlich und er wirkte Wundertaten, erstaunliche und kräftige. Deshalb ist es mir nicht möglich, ihn einen Menschen zu nennen. . . Die einen sagten von ihm, dass der erste Gesetzgeber auferstanden sei von den Toten und viele Heilungen und Künste darweise. Die andern aber meinten, dass er von Gott gesandt sei. Aber er widersetzte sich in vielem dem Gesetz und hielt den Sabbat nicht nach väterlichem Brauch. . . Und es versammelten sich zu ihm von Knechten 150, aber vom Volk eine Menge. Da sie aber sahen seine Macht, dass er alles, was er wolle, ausführe durchs Wort, so befahlen sie ihm, dass er einziehe in die Stadt und die römischen Krieger und den Pilatus niederhaue und über sie herrsche. Aber jener verschmähte es. Und hernach, als Kunde geworden war davon den jüdischen Führern, so versammelten sie sich mit dem Hohenpriester. . . Und sie gingen hin und teilten es dem Pilatus mit. Und dieser sandte hin und liess viele

aus dem Volke niederhauen. Und jenen Wundertäter liess er herbeiführen. Und da er in betreff seiner ein Verhör angestellt, so sah er ein, dass er ein Wohltäter sei, aber nicht ein Übeltäter sei, noch ein Aufrührer, noch ein nach der Herrschaft Strebender, und liess ihn frei. Er hatte nämlich sein sterbendes Weib geheilt. Und er ging an seinen gewohnten Platz und tat die gewohnten Werke. Und da wiederum mehr Volk sich um ihn versammelte, da verherrlichte sich sein Wirken mehr als alle. Von Neid wurden die Gesetzeslehrer vergiftet und gaben 30 Talente dem Pilatus, damit er ihn töte. Und der, nachdem er (das Geld) genommen, liess ihnen den Willen damit sie selbst ihr Vorhaben ausführen sollten. Und jene nahmen ihn und kreuzigten ihn gegen das väterliche Gesetz."

IX

Nastavshu dni opers. 14 mz̄a Ksanthika (Kyr-ms 63/1302 Leningrad). 'The days of the feast of unleavened bread came the fourteenth of the month—Xanthicus.'

10 den mza Loja ezshe est Avga (K. 63/1902, p. 297). 'The tenth day of the month Lous, that is August.'

Mza Artemisia (*ibid.* p. 82). 'The month Artemisius.'

14 mz̄a Ksanthika Harekomaho Aprila (Mosk. Akad. Now Volkolamsko—ms. 651. Moskow., p. 186). 'The fourteenth of the month Xanthicus, which is called April.' The Syro-Macedonian names of the months are found throughout the whole manuscript. About the Syro-Macedonian names of the months used by Josephus in Ant. and in Bell. Jud. See S. Zeitlin, *Megillat Taanit as a Source for Jewish Chronology and History in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Ch. V.

X

In the Christian passage of the Slavonic Josephus we read in part as follows: "And when he (Pilate) had instituted a trial concerning him, he preceived that he was a doer of good, but not an evil-doer, nor a revolutionary, nor one who aimed at power, and let him free; he had, you should know, healed his dying wife. . . The teachers of the law were (therefore) envenomed with envy and gave thirty talents to Pilate, in order that he should put him to death; And he, after he had taken the money, gave them consent that they should themselves carry out their purpose." Comp. this with the Report of Pilate, of the Apocryphal Gospels: "And he (Jesus) did other miracles greater than these, so that I have observed greater works of wonder done by him than by the gods whom we worship. But Herod and Archelaus and Philip, Annas and Caiaphas, with all the people, delivered him to me, making a great tumult against me in order that I might try him. Therefore, I commanded him to be crucified, when I had first scourged him, though I found no cause in him for evil accusation or dealings." The Apocryphal Gospels, translated by B. Harris Cowper, London, 1867., pp. 402–3. Compare also *Ibid.*, pp. 235 and 275 where the wife of Pilate pleads with her husband not to suffer any evil to happen to the good man Jesus.

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